Center for State of the Parks



NINETY SIX NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

SNAPSHOT

The Ninety Six area of South Carolina witnessed two Revolutionary War battles—in November 1775 and May 1781. The later battle lasted 28 days, which was the longest siege during the war. Although the Continental forces were not able to defeat the British, they were successful in depleting their resources to the point where the British were forced to abandon the area.

Ninety Six National Historic Site was established in 1976 to preserve and commemorate South Carolina's early colonial history and the events that took place at the site during the American Revolutionary War. The park contains the Revolutionary War battlefield where the two separate sieges occurred, several 18th-century historic structures (e.g., the Star Fort, the American Siegeworks, the Stockade Fort, and the Island Ford Road), and a museum collection and archives with more than 39,000 items.

The park harbors an array of natural resources such as rare plant and tree species; more than 130 resident bird species; three fish species that are listed as South Carolina conservation priority species; and a number of habitats and ecosystems that support these and many other plant and animal species.

Ninety Six offers a number of opportunities for visitors to explore the



Volunteers wearing replica period clothing present a musket-firing demonstration for visitors.

park—an auto loop tour, approximately 10 miles of hiking and equestrian trails, recreational fishing, and bird-watching opportunities, among others. In 2009, the park developed and installed new interpretive waysides to help educate visitors about the area's history.

CHALLENGIES

 Additional archaeological research needed to determine locations of important sites. Until the specific locations of historic sites are determined through comprehensive archaeological investigations, park staff cannot write or implement resource management plans and prescribed burns cannot take place because maintenance may damage unidentified archaeological resources. Park staff have requested funding for several of these archaeological surveys, including research on a suspected African-American cemetery and an area used by American Indians.

 Museum collection and archives face serious challenges. The park's 2005 museum collection management plan provides guidance on storing photographs and paper materials, and it details methods for eliminating silverfish (small, wingless insects) and controlling mold. The plan also addresses the backlog of uncataloged items and outlines necessary updates to storage and museum exhibits.



- Currently, the park does not have the staffing or funding to implement these changes, but they have requested funding for a museum technician to assist with these projects.
- New visitor center needed. The current visitor center was built as a temporary structure in 1984. It is poorly insulated, has an inadequate heating, cooling, and ventilation system, and does not meet standards appropriate for storing or displaying museum items. In addition, staff feel that this building is inadequate for interpreting the park for visitors, is not large enough to host the number of visitors it receives, and does not provide staff with adequate work space. Park staff have requested Park Service funding to build a new visitor center to correct these deficiencies and are working with the nonprofit Palmetto Conservation Foundation to locate funding for an improved facility.
- Invasive non-native plant species threaten park ecosystems. There are 70 species of non-native plants found at Ninety Six; of those, 17 are invasive and could pose a significant threat to the overall ecological integrity of the park. Species targeted for control efforts include golden bamboo, chinaberry, European privet, kudzu, Japanese honeysuckle, Japanese stiltgrass, Johnsongrass, mimosa, Russian olive, cherry silverberry, and wisteria. The National Park Service's Southeast Regional Exotic Plant Management Team, along with park staff and volunteers, provide most of the effort to remove invasive non-native plant species. In 2009, \$10,000 from the federal economic stimulus package further supported the park's efforts to control non-native plant species.

WHAT'S BEING DONE

- Cultural landscape report was recently completed. Private consultants completed a cultural landscape report for Ninety Six in June 2009.
 The cultural landscape report provides a site history, an assessment of resource conditions, and recommendations for caring for the cultural landscape.
- Park has a new interpretive film.
 Ninety Six has a new interpretive film that is shown daily at the visitor center to help visitors better understand the park's story.
- Volunteers are essential to successful living history program. Each year more than 200 volunteers donate 3,000 hours at Ninety Six National Historic Site, assisting primarily with the living-history program. Most volunteers participate in demonstrations depicting the life of the Cherokee and colonial settlers.
- Partnerships are a key component of resource protection. Ninety Six has an excellent partnership with the nonprofit Palmetto Conservation Foundation. Currently, the park is working with the group to acquire funding for a new visitor center, to develop an action plan for landscape restoration, and to plant native grasses to protect the earthen fortification of Star Fort from further erosion. The park also receives assistance from the National Park Service's Cumberland Piedmont Inventory and Monitoring Network (CUPN). Since Ninety Six does not have any natural resource staff, the work of CUPN staff has greatly enhanced park knowledge of plants, animals, and water and air quality.

ABOUT NPCA AND THE CENTER FOR STATE OF THE PARKS

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its members, and partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

NPCA initiated the State of the Parks program in 2000 to assess the condition of natural and cultural resources in the parks. The goal is to provide information that will help policymakers, the public, and the National Park Service improve resource conditions in national parks, celebrate successes as models for other parks, and ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.

CONTACT US

For a copy of NPCA's full report on Ninety Six National Historic Site, to get copies of reports on other parks, or for more information about the Center for State of the Parks, visit www.npca.org/stateoftheparks or contact Dr. James Nations, vice president for the Center for State of the Parks, at jnations@npca.org.

For more information on Ninety Six National Historic Site contact NPCA's Southeast Regional Office at 865.329.2424, or visit the park online at www.nps.gov/nisi. For media inquiries, please contact Alison Zamanski, NPCA media relations manager, at 202.454.3332 or azemanski@npca.org. To learn more about what the public and our elected officials can do to help improve the health of this park, visit www.npca.org/take_action.